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WITHDRAWN

FRAWG

"'US BETTER 'VIDE UP DESE FISHES'"

FRANG

With an Afterword by
HUGH LOFTING

ANNIE VAUGHAN WEAVER

W379f

A Stokes Book

HILADELPHIA J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY NEW YORK

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Eighth Impression

Under Government regulations for saving paper during the war, the thickness of this book has been reduced below the customary peacetime standards. The text is complete and unabridged.

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To

DAD

FRIEND OF FRAWG

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FISHERMAN FRAWG

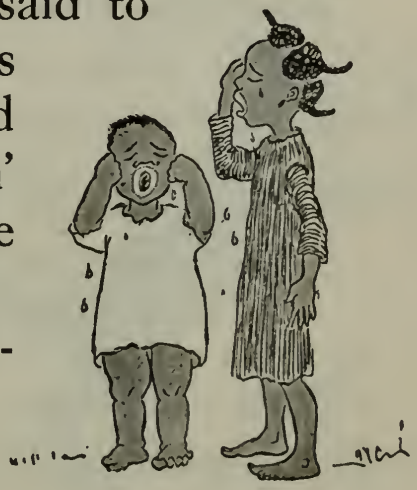
Once, way down South, there was a little five-year-old boy named Frawg. He and his Ma and Pa and six brothers and sisters all lived in a little cabin in the middle of a cotton-field.

His brothers were named John, Bush and Shine. His sisters were named Viney, Iwilla (which was short for I Will Arise and Go To My Father), and Evvaleena. The rest of the family lived out in the yard. There was Sheba the cow, Ab the mule, Solomon the pig, tur-

"THEY ALL LIVED IN A LITTLE CABIN"

keys, geese, and chickens. But best of all, there was Buckeye, the long-tailed yellow dog, who belonged to Frawg and helped him out of many troubles.

One day, Frawg's Ma said to him, "Frawg, my mouf's jes' a-settin' fer some good fried fish. Spos'n you an' de chillun go down to de creek an' cotch some."



Usually Frawg went fishing alone, just he and Buckeye. But this day

Shine and Evvaleena cried so long and so hard that he decided to let them go too, after they promised to be very quiet and not scare away the fishes.

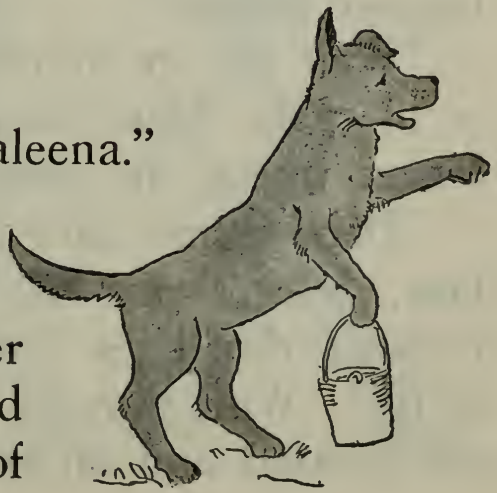
"Buckeye, spos'n you look under de house an' fotch dem fishin' poles," said Frawg. Buckeye soon returned with the poles saying,

"One fer Frawg,
One fer Shine,
An' one fer Evvaleena."

"Now, Buckeye, spos'n you dig us some bait-wums whilst I lines up dese poles." Buck-

eye began digging with all his might and soon he had six fat shiny worms wiggling in the sunlight. He put them all into a big bucket saying,

"Two fer Frawg,
Two fer Shine,
An' two fer Evvaleena."



"Wal, I reckon we's ready now," said Frawg; "git yer poles an' foller me," and off they started, each of

the children carrying a pole and Buckeye carrying the bucket. But the bucket was very heavy on account of the six big worms inside, and Buckeye, soon growing tired, lagged behind.

"Wait jes' er minute, chillun, tell I resses er lil spell. Dese wums is de heavies' things I ever toted," he called after them.

"Dem wums ain't got no bisness bein' so lazy, lettin' you all time tote 'em," said Frawg; "dey'll jes' have ter walk lak de res' of us." With that he emptied the bucket on the ground and off they started again. But

"OFF THEY STARTED"

now they had to walk much more slowly so that the worms could keep up with them.

A bluebird, seeing these six juicy worms and thinking what a fine dinner they would make, lit on a bush nearby and looked at them greedily. Frawg began singing,

"Good mawnin', Mister Bluebird,
I wants ter borrer yo' wing,
Ter fly ercross de ocean
An' hear Miss Lucy sing."

That frightened away Mister Bluebird all right, but he had already given the poor

worms such a scare that Buckeye had to put them back into the bucket again and fasten the lid on tight.

Presently they came to a big green hayfield not quite ready to be cut. "Buckeye," said Frawg, "doncha think us better cotch some hoppergrasses 'cause dem fishes is lible ter be pow'ful hongry terday."

"To be sho, Frawg, ef you ain't de smartes' chile," and Buckeye bounded off to catch the hoppergrasses. But the hoppergrasses were too wise for him. When they saw Frawg coming with his fishing pole they

knew it was time to light out, and away they flew until they looked like a big black cloud in the sky.

Buckeye looked here and he looked there. He ran from one end of the field to the other, but not a single hoppergrass did he see. Just as he was about to give up, he heard a strange noise. On investigating he found it to be the Hoppergrass Choir practicing their Sunday music. They were so busy singing that they had not noticed Frawg and the others. Buckeye pounced upon them and caught all nine. He brought

them back to the children saying,

"Three fer Frawg,
Three fer Shine,
An' three fer Evvaleena."

In a few minutes they reached the creek

bank. Frawg found them all nice tree roots to sit on, put the worms on the hooks, and flung the lines out into the water. Then they all got settled and waited for the fish to bite.

But nothing happened. They sat and sat and sat; they waited and waited and waited. Not a bite. The sun was very hot and before they knew it all three children were sound asleep. Even Buckeye dozed off. For many hours they sat there dreaming of good fried fish and hot cornbread, with never a tug on the lines to wake them.

"Wake up, Frawg," said Buckeye, giving the little boy a good shake, "hit's mos' sundown an' dese fishes ain't never come nigh us. I blieves dey's sleep. Let's thow some rocks in an' wake 'em up."

Frawg roused himself and they began dropping rocks into the creek, making a terrific splash. But nothing happened. Not a fish came near them.

"Whar is dese fishes anyway, I wonders," said Frawg. "I don' blieve dese wums is haff tryin'." So they put hoppergrasses on the hooks and again flung out the lines. Noth-

ing happened. Not a fish came near them.

"I'se got a idee, Frawg," cried Buckeye excitedly. "I'll go cotch ol' Brer Bullfrog an' make him dive in an' wake dem fishes up. I never seed no fishes sleep so hard," and Buckeye dashed off to catch Brer Bullfrog. This time he was gone a long while, but at last here he came, dragging a big green bullfrog by the hind leg.

"Howdye do, Brer Bullfrog," said Frawg politely. "How is you feelin' terday?"

"I'se so low tell I'se mos' draggin' on de groun," growled Brer Bullfrog.

"Wal dat's too bad, 'cause I 'lowed you'd be jes' de one ter he'p me outa trouble an' wake up dese lazy fishes."

"ME jump in dat muddy creek? Not me! An' ef you thows me in I'll jes' tell dem fishes ter stay whar dey is tell you an' yo' fishin' poles is CLEAN outa sight."

Frawg begged him very hard to jump in and wake the fishes up, but Brer Bullfrog is a hard-headed creature.

"Not me. Not me," he kept on saying. "Not me a-stirrin' up de po' fishes."

Frawg, however, was determined to catch

some fish before he went home.

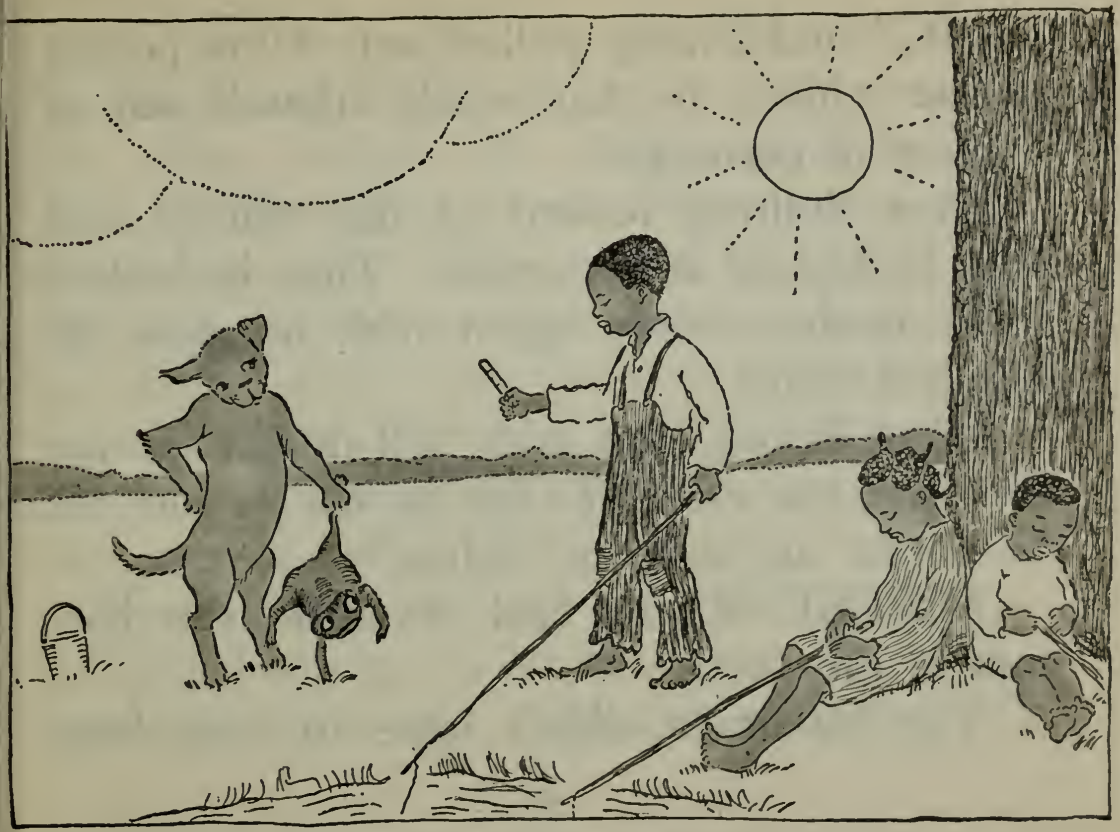
"Brer Bullfrog," he said finally, "how loud kin you sing?"

"Loud es thunder," said Brer Bullfrog.

"How loud kin de other bullfrogs sing?" asked Frawg.

"Wal," said Brer Bullfrog slowly, "dey kin sing mighty loud too, but I kin sing er LEETLE louder'n dey kin."

"Brer Bullfrog," said Frawg, "ef you'll hop in dis creek an' roust up dem fishes I'll give you dis whistle whut'll make you de LOUDESS BULLFROG ON DE CREEK



"'I'LL GIVE YOU DIS WHISTLE'"

BANK," and Frawg pulled out of his pocket a fine whistle he had made himself out of a piece of cornstalk.

Brer Bullfrog looked at the whistle and then he looked at the creek. Then he looked back at the whistle again with his eyes all big and shiny.

"Wal, Frawg," he said, "I'll do hit fer yer dis time, but don' NEVER ax me no mo' ter be stirrin' up dese po' fishes."

KERCHUNK—he had dived to the bottom of the creek.

The fishermen didn't have to wait long

now. The lines began to jerk and bob, waking Shine and Evvaleena out of their dreams. Big, silver, wiggly fish were caught on the ends trying to get loose. Shine's was such a big one that Buckeye had to help him pull it in. All four fishermen worked hard and fast. Fish came from every direction trying to get a taste of good fat worm and good fat hoppergrass. Twelve large trout they caught before their bait gave out.

"Dat's erbout all y'all kin tote," said Brer Bullfrog, hopping up on the bank with a tremendous splash and shaking himself dry. "I

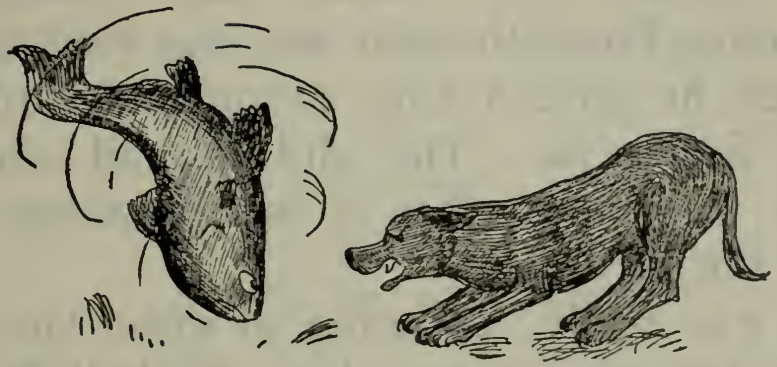
ain't gwine fool wid dem fishes no mo'. Dey's so hongry dey's erbout ter eat me up.—Frawg, gimme dat whistle."

Frawg looked at the pile of fish and indeed wondered how they were going to tote that many.

"Aw right, Brer Bullfrog, you's done er good job. Here, take yo' whistle an' go make dem other bullfrogs 'shame of deyselves."

Just then there was the most terrible noise behind Frawg—a loud yell and sound of scuffling in the grass. Frawg jumped with

fright, and no wonder, for the biggest fish in the creek, the great-grandmother of all the



others, had just jumped out and landed right on top of Buckeye. Such a fight you never saw. The huge fish was jumping high into

the air, flapping tail and fins. She was a quick old rascal, but Buckeye was quicker. He watched his chance, and when big Grandma Trout thought she was well out of danger, he gave a long spring and sank his teeth firmly in. The children all clapped when they saw what a brave, strong dog their Buckeye was.

It was really beginning to grow late now —the sun was just a big red ball in one side of the sky, and the moon was a big white ball in the other side.

"Hit's mos' night, Buckeye," said Frawg.

"Us better 'vide up dese fishes an' start home, 'cause Ma'll be layin fer me wid er whup."

Buckeye placed the twelve fish in three piles, saying,

"Fo' fer Frawg,
Fo' fer Shine,
An' fo' fer Evvaleena."

"How bout ol' Granma Trout?" asked all three children at once.

"Wal," said Buckeye slowly, "ef y'all ain't raisin' no 'jecshuns, I specs ol' Buckeye kin

use Granma Trout roun' supper time."

"You sho kin have ol' Granma," said the children, and they started home singing,

"Fo' fer Frawg,
Fo' fer Shine,
An' fo' fer Evvaleena.
Buckeye fout*
Grandma Trout
An' sunked his teef plum een 'er."

That night Frawg's family had the very best supper they ever had. There was a

** fought*

whole fish apiece for everybody and more left over. After they had finished, Pa said,

"Frawg, dat wuz de BES' TASTIN' fish I ever put in my mouf."

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And Ma said,

"Yass, 'n dis is de greasies' bunch of chillun I ever seed. G'long, git yerself washed."

But Frawg and Buckeye were already fast asleep.

WATERMELONS

Frawg liked to eat, but the thing he liked to eat most was watermelon. He could eat more watermelon than any child on the place, and more than most of the grown people. Still, he always wanted more—he just never could get enough.

One summer, however, his Pa decided that this year Frawg was going to get enough watermelon. So early one morning he took him down to the patch. The vines were spread out all over the ground, and

melons were lying everywhere, cool and wet with dew. Big ones, little ones, middle-sized ones, baby ones, and all kinds. More than Frawg could count.

"Sonny," said Pa as they stood there, "is you EVER had nuff watermillon?"

"Naw sir, Pa," answered Frawg, "I ain't NEVER had nuff watermillon."

"Wal, sonny, terday you sho gwine have ernuff," and Pa began pulling off the biggest ones he could find.

"Frawg, how many millons kin you eat?" asked Pa.

"Plenty," answered Frawg.

"Kin you eat three?" asked Pa.

"Mo'n dat," answered Frawg.

"Fo'?" asked Pa.

"Mo'n dat," answered Frawg.

"Eight?" asked Pa.

"Mo'n dat," answered Frawg.

"Wal, kin you eat twenty?" asked Pa, rolling twenty big melons out into a pile.

"Lemme see," said Frawg, scratching his head, "Pa, spos'n you lets me start in on dese, an' den I kin call you ef I still wants mo'."

"Aw right, Frawg, jes' he'p yo'self now, an' when you wants mo', holler fer me," said Pa, with a grin as he went off into the field to hoe.

"Dis is jes' lak er good dream," whispered Frawg to himself, staring up at the big green pile with his big black eyes.

"Sho is," said Buckeye, coming out of the bushes, "but ef you eats all dese watermillons, yo' stummick'll sho wake you up outa dat dream. You better let me he'p yer eat 'em."

"Cou'se I will—eat as much as you kin," said Frawg. "You start on one side of de

pile an' I'll start on de other," and they both began thumping the melons with their fingers to see which was the ripest.

Frawg picked out a long dark green one, broke it open on a stump, and began eating the juicy red heart, singing between bites,

"I sees er watermillon
Red an' sweet,
Watermillon, watermillon,
Good ter eat."

In five minutes there was hardly a speck of red left on that melon.

The next one he tried wasn't so good, so he threw it away, singing,

"I sees er watermillon
Hard an' green,
Watermillon, watermillon,
How come you so mean?"

All the others, though, were ripe, and soon Frawg had eaten THREE WHOLE WATERMELONS!

"How many is you eat, Buckeye?" asked

Frawg.

"Two," answered Buckeye.

"Is you still VERY hongry?" asked Frawg.

"Naw, not very," answered Buckeye.

"Is you hongry a-tall?" asked Frawg.

"Wal, naw, I ain't raly hongry a-tall," answered Buckeye.

"Buckeye," said Frawg, "you know, I jes' don' blieve I kin hold ernother watermillon. Ef I wuz ter take one mo' bite I'd pop wide open."

"Me too," said Buckeye, "ef I wuz ter

swaller one mo' seed I'd pop slam open."

"Whut us gwine do, Buckeye?" asked Frawg. "Us sho can't eat all dese millons an' ef Pa comes back an' sees dis stack lef', he'll laff hisself plum ter death."

Buckeye scratched his nose, which was sticky and itchy with watermelon juice.

"Lemme see, Frawg," he said, "spos'n us axes Shine an' Evvaleena ter come an' eat some. Dat'll he'p er leetle." So they began calling loudly and soon here came Shine and Evvaleena running toward the patch. They didn't have to be told to help themselves.

In no time they were eating just as fast as they could work their mouths.

But they, too, soon came to a stop. Shine started crying because the melons looked so good and he could hold no more. All the children were so full they couldn't stand up, and there were still ten whole melons left.

"Buckeye, can't us hide dese watermillons so Pa won't find 'em?" asked Frawg.

"Whar us gwine hide 'em an' who gwine tote 'em?" asked Buckeye. Indeed there was no place nearby to hide them and nobody felt like rolling them over into the bushes.

"EATING JUST AS FAST AS THEY COULD WORK THEIR MOUTHS"

For a long time they sat there thinking.

Suddenly a little voice close by commenced singing,

"Some folks say dat
De preacher won't steal,
But I cotched de preacher
In my corn-fiel',
"A-eatin' up de watermillons
Chunkin' 'way de rines,
Singin' 'Hallelujah,
Don't dese millons tas'e fine!' "

"Who dat?" asked Frawg, looking around

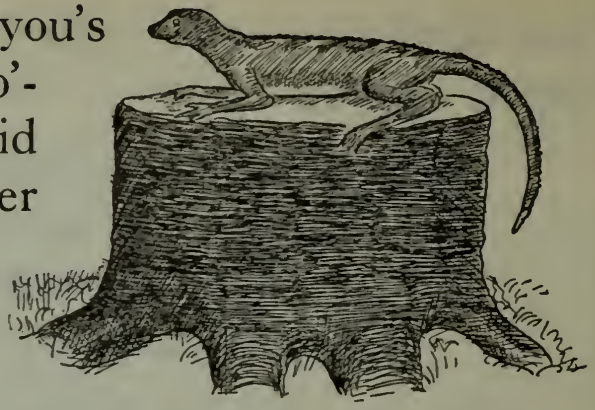
and seeing no one. For answer the voice began singing again,

"Too much er-millon
Fer de boy an' de dawg,
Too much er-millon
Fer Buckeye an' Frawg."

This time Frawg looked harder, and sure enough, there was old Rusty Jacob* sitting on a stump.

"How d'ye do, Jacob," said he. "You wuz settin' so still I couldn' see you."

* *Lizard*



"Wal, I notices you's settin' sorta still yo'-self, Frawg," said Jacob. "Ain't never seed you set so still wid water-millons in plain sight."

"Us can't eat no mo'," said Frawg sadly, "an' us don't know whut ter do wid de res' of dese millons."

Jacob cocked his head around.

"I'se got er notion I kin he'p you,

Frawg," he said. "I ain't much eater myself, but I kin go fotch de other creeturs. I knows dey kin clean up dem millons in short."

"I thanks yer, Jacob," said Frawg, trying to sit up, "an' I hopes yer'll make has'e. Us'll bus' de millons open fer yer whilst yer's gone."

It took Frawg and Buckeye and Evvaleena, all three, to lift one melon, but they lifted it up high and let it fall squash! on the ground. Then another and another, until all the rest of the melons lay broken

open and seeds were spattered everywhere.

Jacob was true to his word. Before he himself could get back the birds arrived. Fluttering down, they lit on the pieces of broken watermelon and began pecking away, getting their feathers pink with juice.

In a few minutes there was a stir in the bushes and Jacob came darting through, followed by Mrs. Jacob, three Sandy Sifters, Brer Possum, Brer Rabbit, Brer Coon, and Brer Squir'l. They each grabbed a piece of melon and now the pile really began to disappear. Soon there were only thin rinds left.

"NOW THE PILE REALLY BEGAN TO DISAPPEAR"

These Buckeye stacked in a neat pile, and sat down again.

But the birds were very silent. They looked like little feathered watermelons.

The creeturs were very silent, too. They looked like little fur-covered watermelons. Everybody felt like a GREAT BIG WATERMELON.

One by one his guests thanked Frawg and wandered slowly away — the birds couldn't even fly, they were so heavy. Shine and Evvaleena started home, leaving Frawg and Buckeye still too full to move.

"Er—Frawg! Er —Frawg!" called Pa, coming through the fields. "You Frawg!" But then he caught sight of poor Frawg stretched out on the ground.

"Ain't sick, is yer, sonny?" asked Pa.

"Naw sir, Pa, I'se jes' sleepy," answered Frawg.

"My, you's er mighty fine eater ter git rid

of all dem big watermillons," said Pa.

"Yassir, dey sho wuz good," said Frawg.

"Sonny, I jes' wants ter ax you one question," said Pa, "an dat is, how come all dem creeturs whut I seed

walkin' away fum here, looked so funny an' roun' an' swolled up?"

"I specs dey's jes' fat," answered Frawg.

"Mebbe so," said Pa, "but how come dey moufs wuz all so pink an' wet?"

"Oh, I specs dey's been gittin' stylish an' paintin' dey faces," said Frawg.

"Mebbe so," said Pa, shaking his head, "but how come dat paint wuz sprinked so heavy wid watermillon seeds?"

At this Frawg began to laugh.

"Shucks, Pa," he said finally, "you knowed I couldn't eat all dem millons. De creeturs

come by an' I let 'em he'p me eat 'em."

"Wal, do tell!" said Pa, "but is you PLUM SHO you got ernuff watermillon yo'self?"

Frawg nodded his head. "I sho is sho, Pa," he answered. "Nuff's nuff, an' TOO MUCH am TOO MUCH."

Pa lifted Frawg up on his back.

"I specs I'll have ter tote yer ternight, sonny," he said, starting toward home.

And Buckeye was so full he had to roll himself all the way there.

SELMA-TOWN

Pa went to town every Saturday and Ma went most Saturdays. Some of the older brothers and sisters generally went along, but Frawg had been only twice in his life, and then he had given his Ma so much trouble that she said she NEVER WOULD take him again.

But that was a long time ago and Ma had forgotten about it. Frawg was just crazy to go to town again and for many weeks he had been begging to be taken

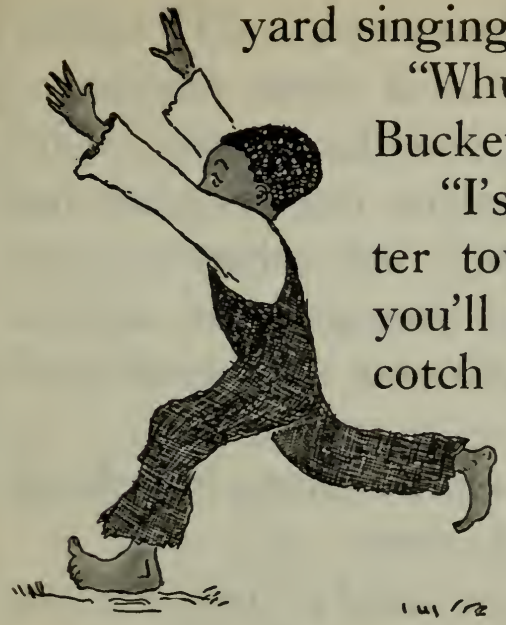
along.

"Ma, PLEASE take me wid yer tomorrer," he said. "I'll do anything yer tells me to."

"Frawg, you is de mos' worrisome piece ever I seed," she said. "I specs I'll have ter take yer 'long ter make yer hesh up. Go out-doors an' cotch me 'bout er dozen of dem Red-eyed-Rolan* chickens, an' ef you don' give me no mo' bothermint, you kin go 'long tomorrer."

Frawg was so happy he couldn't stay still. Just had to run round and round the

* *Rhode-Island Red*



yard singing at the top of his voice.

"Whut ails you?" asked Buckeye.

"I'se gwine ter town, gwine ter town," said Frawg, "an' you'll have ter come he'p me cotch dese Red-eyed-Rolans fer Ma."

Buckeye loved to catch chickens. In less than an hour they had caught a whole coopful of fine, fat fryers.

"Now I'se done holp yer cotch de chick-

ens, can't I go ter Selma-town too?" asked Buckeye, still panting hard from exercise.

"I'se skeered ter ax Ma dis evenin'," said Frawg, "'cause she told me not ter give her NO MO' BOTHERMINT, but when us gits in de wagon termorrer, you jes' hop in too, an' mebbe she won' take no notice of yer." Buckeye nodded.

The next morning before sun-up Ma shook Frawg out of a sound sleep.

"Git up, Frawg," she said; "put on yer clo'es an' eat yer breakfus. Us fixin' ter leave."

Frawg didn't know he could dress so fast. He slipped on his new shirt and overalls, ate his cornbread and molasses, and was the first one to climb in the wagon. The others sat on chairs and boxes but Frawg sat on the floor and hung his feet off the end. Besides, he had to keep pulling the carrots and turnip-greens over Buckeye so that no one would see him.

It was still very early in the morning. Everything was cool and quiet and a few stars were left in the sky. The others climbed in without noticing Buckeye, and Pa was

just about to say, "Git up, mule," when Ma took a look at the end of the wagon.

"Whut ails dem carrits an' turnip-greens?" she said. "Bless me ef hit ain't dat dawg hidin' under my greens. — You Frawg, thow dat dawg outa here, an' ef you wuzn't all dressed up in yo' Sunday-go-ter-meetin' over-halls, I'd thow you out too."

Poor Buckeye had to crawl out.

"Ef hit hadn't been fer dem fleas,

I coulda kep' still," he said sadly. "Goo'bye, Frawg, don' git los'."

Frawg began crying. "Goo'bye, Buckeye, us'll be back ternight, an' I'll sho bring yer somep'n nice," he said, waving his hand.

It took them nearly three hours to get to town. Ab never hurried and Pa liked to stop and talk to everybody on the road. So it was after nine o'clock when they crossed the river bridge. Pa left them there—he had business to attend to.

Ma drove the wagon now, up one street and down the other, selling vegetables and

"UP ONE STREET AND DOWN THE OTHER"

calling out,

"Lady—here's yer nice
Chickens, aigs, an' butterbeans,
'Matoes, carrits an' turnip-greens.

"ER—here's yer nice
Chickens, aigs, an' butterbeans,
'Matoes, carrits an' turnip-greens."

By noon they had sold everything in the wagon. Then they went down on Washington Street, where all the folks were sitting and talking, and ate their dinner. Frawg

slipped half of his sausage and biscuit into his pocket for Buckeye.

Now Frawg had a notion in his head. Once he had heard his brother John talking about a wonderful red store full of gold horns, real drums, and baseball bats. Ever since then Frawg had wanted to see that store, and this was his chance. So when the others were busy talking to some cousins, he dodged through the crowd and ran as fast as he could around the corner to Broad Street.

It took him a long time to find the red

store with the horns and drums and baseball bats, but at last he did, and stood there before the counter feasting his eyes on the beautiful toys. One little drum with bright stripes around it and two little red sticks to beat with was the most beautiful thing Frawg had ever seen. He just couldn't leave it.

"How much do dat cos'?" he asked the clerk.

"Ten cents," said the clerk.

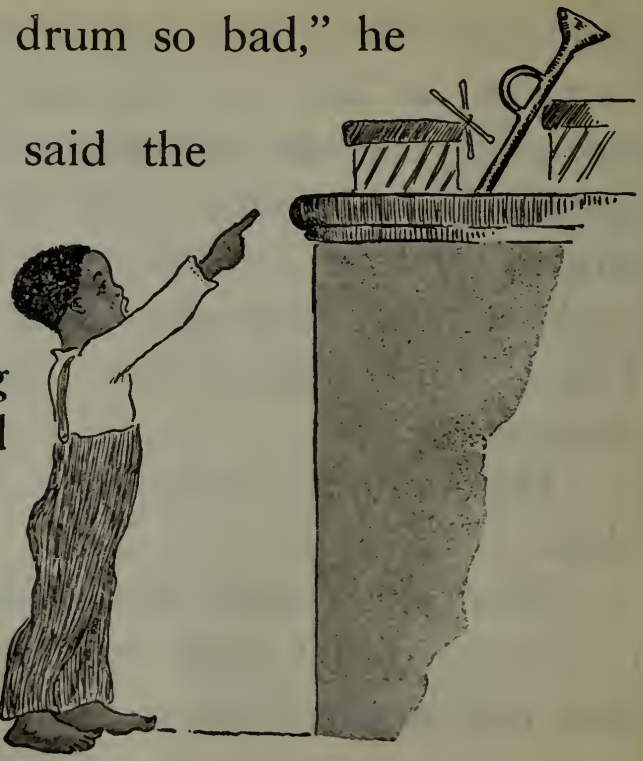
Frawg didn't have even one cent. But it cost nothing to look.

"I wants dat drum so bad," he said.

"Ten cents," said the clerk.

Frawg walked slowly out of the store, wondering where he could get ten cents — ten whole pennies.

But now he had a new



"HE DODGED THROUGH THE CROWD"

worry. He was lost. He hadn't the least idea which way to go and Ma would be looking all over for him. He walked every way but no Ma did he see.

"Er—Ma," he called, "er—Ma!" There was no answer except a lot of people staring at him. Frawg began to cry. He had been a bad boy, he told himself, and this was his punishment. He cried and cried. There was an empty automobile parked at the curb, so Frawg climbed in. He sat there very miserable, with big tears rolling out of his big eyes, and splashing on his new pink shirt.

"I can't fin' Ma," he sobbed. "I specs Ma'll have ter come fin' me. She kin see me better in here," and he began turning the wheel, pretending he was driving to Birmingham. He even blew the horn. At this a nicely dressed white man came out of a store. Seeing Frawg sitting in his car, the man laughed and laughed.

"You little rascal, what are you doing in my car?" he said.

"I'se gwine ter Bumminham," said Frawg.

"Oh, you are, are you?" said the man. "Well, I guess you'll have to go on the train

then, because I have to use this car myself. Here, go buy yourself some ice cream," and he slipped a dime into Frawg's hand.

"Thank yer, Mister," said Frawg, jumping out of the car. He ran down the street, straight to the red store, and bought the striped drum. Out on the sidewalk he marched, beating the drum as hard as he could, and singing as loud as he could,

"Dem whut's got money
Come out an' buy,
Dem whut ain't got none
Set down an' cry."

Soon everybody in the street was looking at Frawg, and a big crowd was following him around. He looked so funny and was making so much noise that nobody in that end of town could miss him.

And that's how his Ma happened to find him. She went out to see what the crowd was doing and there in the middle, making all the noise, was her little Frawg. She grabbed him by the hand and led him off to the wagon.

"You is de wustest chile I got," she said. "I ain't NEVER gwine take you ter town

NO MO'. Gittin' los' an' me a-worrin' myself plum ter death—"

Frawg was very sleepy that night when they reached home, but not too sleepy to give Buckeye the sausage and

biscuit out of his pocket, and to beat on his drum and sing,

"How kin yer tell
When de meat gives out?
Here you come
Wid yo' mouf poked out.

"How kin yer tell
When de meat comes in?
Here you come
Wid er greasy chin."

But it was a LONG time before Frawg's Ma took him to town again.

Solomon was a nice pig when she was little but as she grew older she grew meaner and meaner. And by the time she was grown the children were afraid to go out in the lot where she stayed. She was nearly as tall as the fence, as wide as two big barrels, and when she said "oof oof" it was time to run.

One day, however, she gave everybody a pleasant surprise. When Pa went out to feed her he found not only Solomon but fifteen

little baby pigs too. He called Ma, and everybody came running out to see what Pa had found.

"Ain't dem fine!" said Ma. "Us'll sho have er heap of good hawg meat roun' Chrismus time. Chillun, us gwine live high dis winter."

But Solomon was meaner than ever—she wouldn't let anybody come near her children, not even Pa. After a month, though, she grew tired of these fifteen young pigs always running around her, and when they began eating corn and scraps out of her

trough, she treated them very unkindly. With her long dirty snout she would say "oof" and shove them roughly aside.

So Pa built a separate pen for the little pigs, and then the fun began. Frawg and Shine and Evvaleena fed them every day with scraps left from dinner — slop, as they called it—and soon the pigs grew very tame. Three of them were so tame that when

Frawg took them out of the pen, they followed him all over the yard.

One day Evvaleena said, "Frawg, let's make dem hawgs ride us."

"Hawg ain't gwine let yer stay on his back," said Frawg. "Calf'll ride yer but hawgs is too pranxious."

"I bet dat un wid de white foot'll ride me," said Evvaleena, and she called the pig to her.

While Frawg was off in the field carrying Pa a bucket of cold drinking water, Evvaleena sat there scratching the hog's back up

and down and talking to him. Then when he wasn't noticing, she crawled on his back. Soon the pig stood up and trotted away carrying Evvaleena almost to the pen before she fell off.

"I bet I kin do dat too!" said Frawg, running up. And sure enough, before sundown Frawg and Evvaleena could ride all round the yard, and even Shine could ride a little way. The pigs didn't seem to mind carrying the children—it made them feel like fine mules.

"Us got ter have er bit an' lines an' stir-

"HE CARRIED EVVALEENA ALMOST TO THE PEN"

rups," said Frawg, and with some pieces of old rope he made three little bridles. Those children certainly did look funny riding down the road on three fat pigs with ropes for lines, sacks for saddles, and sweet-gum leaves tied on the pigs' ears to keep horseflies off. They rode to see all their friends; they rode to the country store to get sugar or snuff for Ma; and one day Frawg even rode to Sunday-school on Shadrack.

Pa named them Shadrack, Meshack, and Bednego, because, he said, they were in the hands of the heathen.

The three children used to go galloping down the road shouting,

"Shadrack, Meshack,
An' Bednego!—
Cadullac, Stoodebaker,
Hupmobile!"

Now Buckeye was very jealous of Shadrack. Whenever Frawg played with the pig he would crawl up under the house and sulk. Once Frawg asked him,

"Buckeye, how come you's so down in de mouf terday?"

Buckeye growled and answered, "How come you wastin' so much time foolin' wid er common ol' dirty hawg? I never seed nobody so crazy 'bout er low-down, mud-wallerin' pig!" Then he grinned and added, "I don't keer though. Hawg-killin' time's comin', an' den he'll be ridin' roun' inside you!"

That's what started Frawg worrying.

"Evvaleena," he said, "Pa gwine kill dese hawgs roun' Chrismus time an' us won't have nuhin' ter ride on. I sho hones-after* good

* *loves*

"THEY BEGAN STARVING THEM"

hawg meat, but I don't want Pa ter kill dese three. Can't us study out er way ter save 'em?"

Evvaleena thought and thought.

"I don't know," she said, "less us starves 'em. Ef us kin make 'em po' an' lean Pa won't kill 'em. He don't NEVER kill no lean hawg."

So they began starving poor Shadrack, Meshack, and Bednego. They fed all the other pigs, and gave their three only enough to keep them alive. Shadrack, Meshack and Bednego grew thinner and thinner and

thinner. Their backbones stood out like knife blades, their skins hung off like empty bags, their heads were long and narrow. In fact, they looked more like hungry dogs than anything else.

Ma at last noticed this.

"Dem hawgs sho is po'," she said. "Whut yer reckon ails 'em? Here, Frawg, take dis bucket an' go slop dem hawgs, an' be SHO an' give yo' three plenty. Y'all rides 'em roun' so much dey cain't put on no meat." Then she peeped through a knot-hole in the wall and saw Frawg empty the whole bucket

in the pen for the other pigs, saving only a few corn cobs for his three. Ma leaned out of the window and called,

"You Frawg, whut IS you doin? No wonder dem hawgs is gittin' so po', wid you starvin' 'em plum ter death. Gimme dat bucket," and she filled it full of fresh ears of corn.

You should have seen those pigs eat. The poor things were so hungry they ate three bucketfuls of corn and would have eaten more if Ma had given it to them.

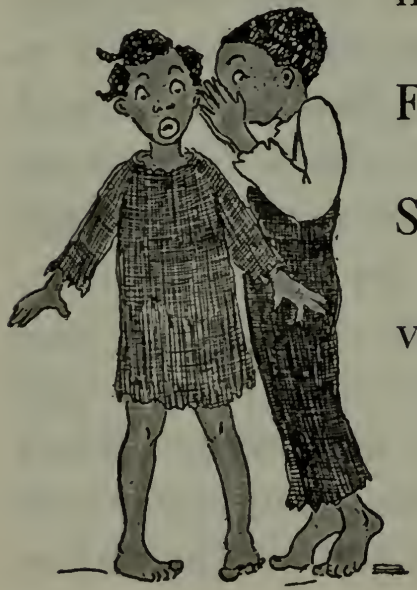
"You little rapscallions," she said, turning

to the children, "don't EVER let me ketch y'all ergin treatin' dem hawgs so scan'lous," and she gave them each a good whipping.

Frawg grew worried again. He said to Evvaleena, "Us can't starve dem pigs no mo', an' long come col' weather, dey'll be fine an' fat ergin. Pa'll sho kill 'em fer hawg meat, an' us won't have nuthin' ter ride on."

Sure enough, Shadrack, Meshack, and Bednego got a full dinner every day and they grew fatter and fatter and fatter. They looked like three big, round sausages with a snout at one end and a tail at the other.

Hog-killing time was drawing near. Pa had already cleaned out his barrels and bought his salt.



"Po' Shadrack," said Frawg.

"Po' Meshack," said Shine.

"Po' Bednego," said Evvaleena.

But Frawg did not give up. One crisp morning early in December he pulled Evvaleena behind

a door and whispered in her ear, "SH—sh, I heared Pa say dis is fine weather fer puttin' up hawg meat.—Us gotta hide dem pigs quick. Go git Shine."

Shortly afterward, the three of them started down the hill with a bucket, pretending they were going to the spring for water —and of course Shadrack, Meshack and Bednego were tracking along behind them as usual. But they didn't stop at the spring. Turning to the right they followed the cow path that led way down to the bottom, a woodsy place thick with pine trees and low

bushes.

"Can't NOBODY find us here," said Frawg. "Us is two miles fum de house."

All day long they stayed there, keeping very still and quieting the hogs by scratching their backs. In the bucket Frawg had brought plenty of cornbread and this kept them from being too hungry.

As night came on it grew cold. Shine went to sleep with his arms around Meshack, which made him warmer. But Evvaleena was scared. A big "squench" owl high up in some tall pine tree kept making mournful

"NIGHT CAME ON"

noises and singing,

"Whoo—are
Whoo—are
Whoo—are
YOU?
"You—are
You—are
You—are
WHOO?"

This frightened even Frawg, but he couldn't listen long. They all six fell sound asleep and didn't wake up till daylight.

Then it was somebody's shouting that woke them. Frawg thought it was the owl—

"Yoo—hoo—Er baby—Yoo—hoo—Whar y'all? Er Frawg—oo—oo—"

It was Ma. Suddenly she came through the bushes and saw her three children half-awake, hovering over three sleeping pigs. Ma didn't stop to laugh or to fuss. She was so glad to see her children she grabbed them all up together and hugged them, her eyes wet with tears and her voice choking.

"My po' li'l babies," she said, "whut y'all run erway fer? Me an' yer Pa been lookin' fer

yer all yestiddy an' all las' night. Wuz yer los' ?"

Frawg didn't know what to say. But on the way home he managed to explain that they had run away to save Shadrack, Meshack, and Bednego from being made into hog meat.

"Don't y'all worry, chillun," said Ma. "Us ain't gwine kill dem pigs. Us got plenty mo'."

Christmas came before long, and what a Christmas! There was plenty to eat for everybody—plenty of cornbread and biscuits, plenty of molasses and sweet potatoes, plenty of fried chicken and good fresh hog meat,

but not made out of Shadrack, Meshack and Bednego.

Pa led Frawg, Shine, and Evvaleena to the back door where Shadrack, Meshack, and Bednego were standing, brushed off clean and harnessed with brand new saddles and lines made of real leather.

"I made 'em myself whilst y'all wuz sleep at night," Pa said.

"Thank yer, Pa," said Frawg, hopping on Shadrack.

"Dem pigs is y'all's, too," added Pa, "an' yer won't NEVER have ter kill 'em, an' yer

won't NEVER have ter run off ter de bottom NO MO'."

But Buckeye was still jealous. He just snurled his nose, and when the children rode off he ran longside too, making fun of Frawg and singing,

"Whut's dat racket
Comin' down de road?
Makes mo' noise dan er
Secon'-han' Fo'd.*

"'Tain't nobody but er
Boy named Frawg,

* *Ford*

Settin' on de back
Of er low-down hawg!"

And a mocking-bird made fun of them both, singing,

"Who dat makin'
All dat fuss?
Who dat raisin'
All dat dus'?
'Tain't nobody but er
Yaller dawg,
Chasin' er boy
On er low-down hawg!"

THE FIRE

In the summer-time Frawg's family was troubled by mosquitoes. Late every afternoon they came swarming out of the bushes and low places up to Frawg's house for supper. They were great big striped mosquitoes with long bills and longer appetites. And each one tried to sing louder than the rest. Frawg hated them. So did the others, and especially Ma.

The cabin, of course, had no screens, so Ma had a very hard struggle against the

mosquitoes, but she generally won out. Every afternoon about sundown she set a bucketful of smoking rags in the house and left it there until bed-time. The smoke filled every corner and drove most of the mosquitoes outside into the fresh air. Then Ma rubbed kerosene on the beds; and lastly, she took a big whip and beat around the room.

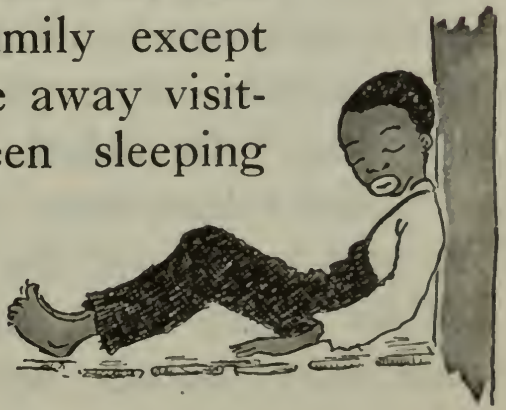
All the time she was singing her "skeeter song," as she called it—she thought it helped scare the mosquitoes away. It went something like this:

"Skeeter flew rat* in my do',
Zoon, Zoon, Zigger.
Skeeter lit on my big toe,
Zoon, Zoon, Zigger.
Skeeter sang er sweet li'l song,
Zoon, Zoon, Zigger.
I tol' dat skeeter to go 'long,
Zoon, Zoon, Zigger.
Skeeter bit rat whar he lit,
An' me, I hit whar he bit,
Mashed my toe erginst de bed
But I kilt dat ol' muss-keeter dead."

* *right*

Some days when she was tired she just sang "Zoon, Zoon, Zigger" over and over again. Ma went to lots of trouble, but she saved her family from being eaten up by those worrisome insects.

One Sunday afternoon Ma and Pa and all of the family except Frawg and Viney were away visiting. Frawg had been sleeping and climbing trees nearly all day, but about half-past six he grew restless and



wanted something else to do. Buckeye was asleep except when he was scratching. Frawg watched him scratch. First a flea bit his ear, then a front leg, then a hind leg, then the other ear, then his tail. Poor Buckeye was scratching and biting and rubbing himself against trees. Frawg felt sorry for him.

"Buckeye, want me ter smoke dem fleas off'n you?" he asked.

"I don't keer how yer gits 'em off, jes' so yer gits 'em," said Buckeye unhappily.

"Aw right, come on, le's go out in de lot whar won't nobody see us," said Frawg. He

went into the house and collected some old rags, a can of kerosene, and a match. Then they went out into the cow lot, closing the gate behind them. Frawg rubbed Buckeye up and down with kerosene, tied the rags around his neck, and set them on fire. Buckeye gave a yelp and started running round and round the yard, howling and yowling. The poor dog really would have burned up if he hadn't jumped into the hog-wallow. There he rolled over and over in the water, putting out every spark of fire.

But the mischief was already done. Dry

"BUCKEYE STARTED RUNNING"

hay scattered over the ground had caught a-fire and flames rose up everywhere. The cow, pigs, and chickens were terrified and so was Frawg. He made for the gate which, fortunately, he left open. Buckeye, Sheba, pigs, ducks, and chickens came flying out.

The flames rose higher and were licking the fence. Ma, sitting on a neighbor's porch across the road, saw the fire. With a high yell she jumped into the wagon. Pa and the other brothers and sisters piled in too and for once, Ab raced home. The neighbors piled in their wagons and followed,

bringing buckets with them.

The fence to the cow yard was burning away, but what Ma feared for was her own house and furniture.

"Er—my sewin'-machine an' my quilts," she kept moaning. "ER—my sewin'-machine an' my quilts!"

Pa moaned too. "Er—my fawty dollars in de bottom of de trunk! Er—my fawty dollars in de bottom of de trunk!"

Quick as a lizard, Ma jumped from the wagon and rushed inside. With the strength of five women she came out carrying the

"THEY PASSED BUCKETS OF WATER FROM THE SPRING"

sewing-machine under one arm and six quilts under the other.

Meanwhile Pa did a very wise thing. A big spring lay at the bottom of the hill just about a hundred feet from the cow lot. He lined the men and boys along the hillside, and like fast clock-work, they passed buckets of water from the spring to Pa and Bush in the cow lot.

Ma and the other women were moving furniture out into the yard.

And where do you think Frawg was? Frightened to death, he and Buckeye had

"MOVING FURNITURE OUT INTO THE YARD"

crawled way up under the house and there they crouched, praying for a rain to come and put out the fire.

The cow shed had now caught and a wind was blowing sparks over toward the house. Pa was afraid.

"Er—fi', don't go no fudder! Er—fi', stay whar you is!" he groaned. The men and boys worked like giants, but the wind was stronger than they.

Then a strange thing happened. Maybe it was because Frawg prayed and maybe it wasn't, but anyway, the same wind that blew

the sparks toward the house blew a dark cloud over the whole sky. Drops of water fell thick and fast and—the fire stopped. When the people saw the rain they set their buckets down and shouted,

"O big black cloud hangin' in de sky,
Opened up an' squenched de fi'.
Rain come down on me
Er—de rain come down."

Ma's quilts got wet, her sewing-machine got wet, the beds and all the food were drenched, but Ma didn't care—her house

was saved and her things were saved. She sat down on a pile of wet pillows and cried,

"Praise be!" she said, "de Lawd done stopped dis fi' !"

"Praise be!" said all the folks as they shook hands with Ma and Pa and took their buckets home.

Pa sat down by Ma and mopped the sweat and rain off his face. One of the chickens walked over toward the burned shed cackling,

"Somebody sot dis shed on fi',
Who done done it?

Who done done it?
Somebody sot dis shed on fi'
An' burnt it nelly* down."

Ma and Pa watched her. Presently she came back, cocked her head over and cackled again,

"Frawg done sot dis shed on fi',
He done done it,
He done done it,
Frawg done sot dis shed on fi',
An' burnt it clean to de groun'."

* *nearly*

Ma stopped crying and Pa stopped mopping.

"Whar Frawg?" they both asked at once. Ma broke a long switch from the chinaberry tree.

"Er—Frawg!" she called.

No answer.

"Er—Frawg!" she called again.

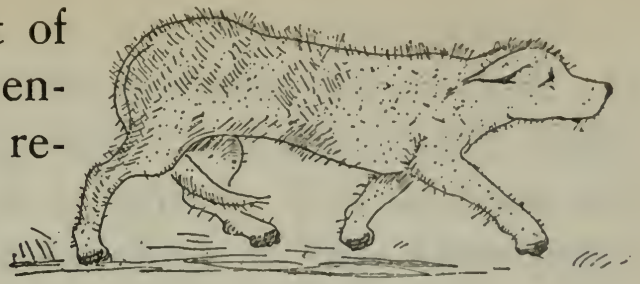
No answer.

Sticking out from under the house, though, was a long, blackish yellow tail.

"You Buckeye," said Ma, "whar Frawg?"

Buckeye crawled out looking very, very

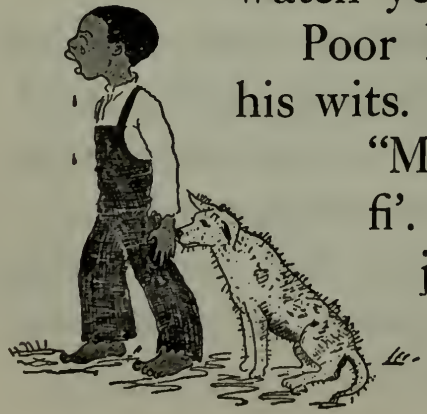
queer, with most of his hairs burned entirely off, and the remaining hairs scorched almost to cinders. Buckeye said nothing, but walked painfully away. Ma stooped down, took off her glasses, and looked under the house. All she could see was two big eyes.



"You Frawg," she said, "ef you don't come out fum under dat house, an' come out quick, I'll skin you erlive."

Frawg came out.

"You is de ruination of me an' evvybody else," Ma scolded. "How come yer ter set dis shed on fi'? I mighta knowed you'd git inter some sort of debbilmint wid nobody ter watch yer."



Poor Frawg was scared out of his wits.

"Ma, I didn' go ter set it on fi'. Sho nuff, I didn'. I wuz jes' smokin' de fleas off'n Buckeye an' he sot de hay on fi'," sobbed

Frawg.

"Well, whut did you crawl up under de house fer? Tryin' ter set hit on fi', too?" asked Ma.

"Naw'm," he answered. "I'se been prayin'. Me an' Buckeye been prayin' fer rain."

Ma was very religious and didn't know what to do now. She looked at Frawg a long time to make sure he was telling the truth. Then she broke the whip into little pieces.

"I spec I oughta whup yer anyway," she said, "but ef de Lawd done fergived yer an'

sont de rain, I spec I'll hatter fergive yer too. But don't EVER let me ketch you foolin' wid no fi' no mo'." And she told Pa what had happened.

At sight of all the wet furniture and clothes Frawg broke out crying again, and Pa had to take him in his arms and sing him to sleep with,

"Frawg done prayed dis fi' erway,
O li'l Frawg, whut did you say?
Rain come down an' de flames died out,
Folks looked up an' raised er shout!

Rain come down,
Rain come down,
Rain—come—down."

The End

AN AFTERWORD

This was meant to be a preface. What is a preface? Well, it is something that is supposed to come before the story—and to be read before the story.

When I first read "Frawg" I liked it so much that I asked the girl who wrote it if she would let me write a preface to it. She said I could.

Then I remembered that when I was a boy I *never* read prefaces. I was always too anxious to get on to the story. And this preface I wanted to be a preface for children, not just for the growns-ups who read the story aloud. So remembering that as a child I (and most other children too) skipped prefaces because we wanted to get on with the story, I made up my mind I'd be very clever and put the preface at the *end* of the book instead of the beginning. I thought then perhaps the children might read it or want to hear it read aloud.

But then came another difficulty. A preface to a story is supposed to be something *about* that story. And if I put my preface at the end you would have already read the story and would know all about it anyway. Therefore I thought I wouldn't try to write much about the story but I would tell you something about the girl who wrote it, Miss Annie Vaughan Weaver.

She was born in the town of Selma, Alabama, in the year 1905. She is the most silent author I ever met. Writers when they get together are, as a rule, the noisiest people in the world. Chatter, chatter, chatter! I suppose it is because their business is a silent and lonesome one and as soon as they get in company they break loose like magpies.

But not so Miss Annie Vaughan, as she was called in Selma. Getting her to talk at all is very hard work. When she was little she had a dog called Potsy and she used to do most of her talking to him. She would get inside his kennel and tell him all her secrets and all her troubles. Potsy was a better listener than most people and the way he wagged his tail and nodded his head showed that he understood troubles—even a young girl's troubles. Besides, he

was perfectly splendid at keeping secrets. You notice that she has put a dog in the story of Frawg and she has him talking quite naturally like people, only he talks with a southern accent, being an Alabama dog. I suspect that this is her own Potsy disguised under the name of Buckeye.

But anyway she is the kind of girl who would sooner talk to the world by writing stories and drawing pictures than by sitting around chattering. When she was still very very young she made up her mind she was to be an artist. She drew pictures all day long. When she had no more paper left she made pictures on anything handy—on the table cloth at breakfast, in the family photograph album, and all over the walls of her father's house. When this was discovered she was given a great scolding; and then, as usual, she went to her dog and told him all about this new trouble—how her family didn't seem to care anything for her art and could not see any beauty in the pictures she had presented to the house free of charge.

So, in order to console her, the good Potsy let her draw pictures all over the inside of his kennel—pictures of beautiful

beef-bones, hard-boiled eggs and all the things the dog was most fond of. You might think a dog would get conceited and start to put on airs after having his kennel decorated by a real artist. But the only thing it did to Potsy was to make all his dreams pleasant dreams, now that he could fall asleep with his eyes fixed on the portrait of a beautiful beef-bone and a hard-boiled egg.

Annie Vaughan's love for drawing pictures began to spread to all the other children on her father's plantation, both white and coloured. And very soon they had a Drawing Club. But the club had only one pencil, so the members had to take it in turns to draw pictures. Soon they got so impatient waiting for the pencil that they began to draw only part of a picture at a time. For instance, some one would start a picture of a cow. As soon as he had drawn the hind legs some one else would take the pencil and paper and draw the front legs. But there were times when they would get things mixed up. Once a very small coloured boy drew a pig's snout on a picture which had started as a horse. It is true the legs had not been drawn very well and *might* have been a pig's. But the other members of the Drawing Club said it was because the

little boy was very fond of ham and was just naturally tempted by the thought of a pig as large as a horse.

Now everybody who draws at all can draw some things better than others. Myself, for instance: the things I draw best are lamp-posts and grandfather clocks. Very often when I start to draw a picture I may mean it to be an elephant but when it is done it looks more like a barn. Sometimes it is very exciting to see how it will come out. Of course it doesn't matter so much when you are making pictures for stories you have written yourself. Because if the story was about an elephant, we'll say, and the picture turns out to be a barn you can always go back and change the story into a story about a barn.

Now Annie Vaughan is very lucky. The pictures she draws best are pictures of coloured people. (And let me tell you you can write a whole lot more stories about people, coloured or white, than you can about lamp-posts and grandfather clocks). And not only can she draw pictures of them but she really knows them. She was brought up among them from the time she was born until only a year or two ago. These little stories you have just read are liv-

ing, moving glimpses of the life, the thoughts and the talk of southern children, just as living and moving as your own face laughing in a mirror.

More than that, most of the people in the stories really played with Annie Vaughan when she was a child. Frawg, for instance, is still down there on her parents' plantation near Selma, Alabama. And times when he is not working or helping his Ma he still strolls down to that little stream in the hollow with his fishing pole upon his shoulder; and Iwilla (short for "I will Arise and go to My Father") hears his voice sing across the peaceful fields of cotton:

"Good mawnin', Mister Bluebird!
I wants to borrer yo wing
Ter fly across de ocean
An' hear Miss Lucy sing."

HUGH LOFTING.

New York, February, 1930.

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